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January 25, 2018

John Michael Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

I request that the President's budget request for fiscal year 2019 ensures adequate funding for departments' and agencies' background investigations for purposes of suitability assessments and security clearances. I also request you treat personnel security as a special topic in the budget request. It is essential that background investigations are treated as a critical mission function that receives attention from our government's top leadership.

Since 2014, agencies have seen lengthy delays in background investigations, a situation which now poses a national security personnel crisis. In fact, the Comptroller General announced today that the Government Accountability Office will place the government's personnel security clearance process on its "High Risk List." Previous GAO studies (GAO-18-29; GAO-18-117) have highlighted that long-standing key initiatives regarding security clearance reform remain "incomplete." Without the necessary resources, the current model of processing clearances will continue to undermine our readiness, hurt the caliber of our workforce, and impede agencies' ability to achieve their mission.

There are many steps that the National Background Investigation Bureau and other agencies are taking to reduce the inventory, shorten the time for investigations, and decrease the level of effort required. However, adequate and stable funding is imperative for sustained reform. Too often agencies underinvest in security as a support function.

I look forward to working with you to accelerate reforms to our nation's personnel security processes and provide the funding this effort requires.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senate